# Procurement Notice and Terms of Reference

*Assignment name:* ***Expert assistance in the CAF Excellence Recognition (CER): Recertification and Training-of-Trainers Programme for External Feedback Actors (EFAs)***

*Reference Number:* ***# 96/2026***

**Section 1. Introductory Information**

1.1 Background information on the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA)

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is an intergovernmental organisation for enhancing regional cooperation, promoting shared learning, and supporting the development of public administration in the Western Balkans. ReSPA Members are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, while Kosovo* [1]is a beneficiary. ReSPA's purpose is to help regional governments develop better public administration, public services, and overall governance systems for their citizens and businesses and prepare for membership in the European Union.

ReSPA establishes close cooperation with ministers, senior public servants, and heads of function in Member countries. ReSPA also works in partnership with the European Union, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), other regional players such as OECD/SIGMA and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), as well as agencies and civil society organisations. Since its inception, ReSPA, as an international organisation and a key regional endeavour in Public Administration Reform, has contributed to capacity-building and networking through in-country support mechanisms, peer review, and the production of regional research material.

1.2 ReSPA now seeks to engage short-term expert assistance in the CAF Excellence Recognition (CER): Recertification and Training-of-Trainers Programme for External Feedback Actors (EFAs)

1.3 Expected deliverables of the assignment are as per Terms of Reference.

1.4 Tentative timeframe: the assignment is expected to be performed during the period **December 2026 – February 2027.**

1.5 **NOTE: Please clearly indicate in the Methodology that you shall submit the entity with whom the contract would be concluded (in case your application is successful), i.e. whether the contract would be concluded with:**

- **the expert as a physical person;**
- **a company on behalf of the expert (the name of the company should also be provided).**

**This cannot be changed in the procedure to follow.**

**In addition, you are kindly requested to fill out and submit the following documents:**

**Legal Entity File (for individual expert) – attached to this document**
**Legal Entity File (for private company) - attached to this document**

[1] * This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and ICJ Advisory opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of independence

Please also submit any supporting documents required in these templates.

**Section 2. Preparation of CVs and supporting documentation**

2.1 Language of application:

The CVs and supporting documentation shall be prepared in English.

2.2 The CVs should provide information on the qualifications and competencies of the applicant, her/his general track record and previous specific experience in similar assignments, as required by the Terms of Reference. The applicants should particularly state in their CVs:

Length of general and specific professional experience, in line with ToR;

The expert should demonstrate substantial expertise in public administration reform, organisational development and quality management, including hands-on experience in implementing the CAF 2020 model, designing and delivering CAF, PEF and training-of-trainers programmes, assessing and recertifying External Feedback Actors, advising public institutions on quality-management systems and CAF institutionalisation, and a strong understanding of European and Western Balkan CAF practices, methodologies and professional networks.

2.3 The required qualifications, experience and skills: as per Terms of Reference.

**Section 3. Submission of CVs and supporting documentation**

3.1 The interested candidates are invited to submit a proposal consisting of the following documentation:

Written methodology: explaining their experience related to the analysis subject and how they intend to respond to the assignment;

Personal CV including past experience in similar activities and particularly issues referred to under point 2.2 of this Procurement Notice;

At least three contacts for references (name and position of referee, email address and phone number), which may be contacted by ReSPA. (NOTE: There is no need to submit reference letters; ReSPA will directly contact the referees.)

Financial offer (which shall specify a total sum amount in euros as well as max. number of working days proposed) in a separate e-mail.

3.2 The required documentation should be submitted in electronic format by e-mail to the following address: procurement@respaweb.eu by **2 December 2026,** before Midnight. Late submissions will not be considered for evaluation. **The application should contain in the e-mail title the following reference: activity No. 96/2026 Expert assistance in CER: Recertification and ToT for EFAs**

Public servants from ReSPA Members and Kosovo are not eligible to apply.

**Selection 4. Evaluation of offers**

4.1 The offer will be evaluated against the required qualifications, experience, skills and competencies as defined in the Terms of Reference.

4.2 The applicant securing the highest final ranking will be invited to negotiate the contract and the fee proposed by ReSPA. If negotiations are successful, the selected candidate will be awarded the contract. Should the negotiations fail, the next-ranked candidate will be invited to the negotiations.

**Section 5. Final Considerations**

5.1 The payment will be made in one instalment, following the submission and approval of the deliverables.

5.2 The following document is attached to this Procurement Notice: Terms of Reference

5.3 ReSPA reserves the right to cancel this procurement procedure at any moment without any compensation to the applicants. The cost of preparing a proposal and of negotiating a contract, including any related travel, cannot be reimbursed by ReSPA under any circumstances nor can ReSPA be held liable for it, regardless of the outcome of the procurement procedure.

5.4 Should you need any further clarifications with respect to this procurement notice, please contact: Mr Slaven Bukarica, Quality Management Officer via e-mail: s.bukarica@respaweb.eu, by **30 November 2026** (midnight), at the latest. ReSPA will post the response, including an explanation of the query without identifying the source of inquiry, on its website (www.respaweb.eu) by **1 December 2026**. Any request for clarification must be sent by standard electronic communication to the above e-mail address.

# Terms of Reference

# Request for Services

*Expert assistance in the CAF Excellence Recognition (CER): Recertification and Training-of-Trainers Programme for External Feedback Actors (EFAs)*

## 1. Background

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is an intergovernmental organisation that enhances regional cooperation, promotes shared learning, and supports the development of public administration in the Western Balkans. ReSPA Members are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, while Kosovo[2] is a beneficiary. ReSPA aims to help regional governments develop better public administration, public services, and overall governance systems for their citizens and businesses and prepare them for membership in the European Union.

ReSPA establishes close cooperation with ministers, senior public servants, and unit heads in member countries. ReSPA also works in partnership with the European Union, precisely the Directorate-General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood (DG ENEST), other regional actors such as OECD/SIGMA and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), as well as agencies and civil society organisations. Since its inception, ReSPA, as an international organisation and a key regional endeavour in Public Administration Reform, has contributed to capacity-building and networking activities through on-demand support mechanisms, peer review and the production of regional research materials.

The European Commission (EC) provides directly managed funds to support the ReSPA activities (research, training and networking programmes) in line with the EU accession process. Currently, ReSPA is implementing its sixth EC Grant Contract "Support to the Regional School of Public Administration for implementing PAR Agenda and facilitating EU accession process in the WBs", which is active as of 1 January 2026.

ReSPA works primarily through regional networks which operate at three levels: Ministerial, Senior Officials, and networks/working groups of experts and senior practitioners. There are five regional thematic groups: (1) Policy management, better regulation and simplification; (2) European integration and accession negotiations; (3) Human Resources Management and Professional Development; (4) Service Delivery (digitalisation and quality management); (5) Public Finance Management.

## 2. Problem statement and description of the assignment

Strengthening citizen-oriented public administration through Total Quality Management (TQM) remains an important driver of sustainable public administration reform. The Common Assessment Framework

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(CAF) is the European quality management model for public-sector organisations and supports institutions in improving performance, accountability, effectiveness and service delivery.

As the host of the Regional Quality Management Centre (RQMC), ReSPA plays a leading role in supporting quality management and CAF implementation across the Western Balkans. ReSPA also serves as a National Organiser of the CAF Excellence Recognition (CER) procedure and actively supports public administrations in strengthening organisational excellence and continuous improvement.

The CAF Excellence Recognition procedure requires External Feedback Actors (EFAs) to possess the necessary competencies and up-to-date knowledge to conduct external feedback assessments in accordance with the latest CER methodology and standards. As the CER methodology evolves, existing EFAs must regularly update their competencies and maintain alignment with current requirements.

To address this need, ReSPA will organise a regional CER Recertification Training Programme for active members of the regional PEF network and previously certified External Feedback Actors. The programme will support the transition from the former PEF methodology to the new CAF Excellence Recognition approach and ensure the consistent application of CER standards throughout the region.

Beyond recertification, the programme is designed to strengthen the capacity of active External Feedback Actors to serve as national trainers and multipliers of the CAF Excellence Recognition methodology. Participants will receive a complete training package, including presentations, practical exercises, case studies, templates, facilitator guidance and training curricula, enabling them to organise and deliver national CER awareness-raising, capacity-building and preparatory training activities within their own administrations. This approach will contribute to the sustainability of CAF implementation and ensure that future CER capacity-building efforts can increasingly be delivered at national level.

The training programme will combine online learning, practical assignments, peer learning and an in-person training module. Participants will strengthen their ability to assess CAF implementation, evaluate organisational maturity, analyse evidence, conduct site visits and prepare professional feedback reports in accordance with CER requirements. Furthermore, the participants will work on a real CAF case assessing the specific items foreseen by the CAF Excellence Recognition.

Through this initiative, ReSPA will contribute to maintaining a qualified regional pool of External Feedback Actors capable of conducting CER assessments and facilitating future national training activities. The programme will strengthen national ownership of CAF and CER implementation, support knowledge transfer within public administrations and create a sustainable network of qualified practitioners able to support future quality-management initiatives throughout the Western Balkans.

## 3. Tasks and responsibilities

The expert will design, deliver and assess the complete recertification programme. The expert will be supported by relevant ReSPA staff, including certified PEF practitioners.

### 3.1 Preparatory Design and Coordination (6 Expert Days)

The expert will:

- Develop the training concept and methodology.
- Prepare detailed agendas and implementation plans.
- Develop training materials, practical exercises, case studies and simulations.
- Prepare participant guidance and assessment tools.
- Coordinate implementation with ReSPA.
- Develop the structure and content of the CER knowledge package for future use.
- Develop a standardised trainer package and national roll-out curriculum that can be used by recertified EFAs to deliver future CER training and awareness-raising activities in their respective countries.

**3.2 Module I: Online CER Onboarding (2 Expert Days)**

Two online sessions will be delivered on 16 and 17 December 2026.

The sessions will cover:

- Introduction to the CAF Excellence Recognition methodology.
- Key changes between the former PEF procedure and the CER methodology.
- Roles and responsibilities of External Feedback Actors.
- Assessment criteria and standards.
- Evidence collection and analysis.
- Assessment scoring methodology.
- Site-visit planning and preparation.
- Preparation for practical assignments and recertification requirements.

**3.3 Individual Assessment and Recertification (6 Expert Days)**

Following the online module, participants will complete an individual assignment based on a practical CER assessment case.

The expert will:

- Assess each assignment individually.
- Evaluate participants' ability to apply CER methodology independently.
- Assess the quality of evidence analysis, findings and recommendations.
- Provide written participant-specific feedback.
- Determine participants' readiness for recertification under the CER methodology.

Approximately 20 participants are expected to complete the recertification process.

**3.4 Regional In-Person CER Recertification and Training-of-Trainers Programme (1 Expert Day)**

A one-day regional training event will be organised in Tirana, Albania.

The training will include:

- Discussion of common findings from participant assignments.
- Site-visit simulations.
- Interview and observation exercises.
- Group assessment exercises.
- Consensus scoring exercises.
- Best practices for feedback reports.
- Exchange of regional and EU experiences and good practices.
- Final guidance related to recertification requirements.

The programme will be embedded with a **Training-of-Trainers (ToT)**. Special attention will be given to preparing participants to independently deliver introductory and advanced CER training sessions within their own institutions, national CAF resource centres and public administration training systems.

Recertification will depend on active participation in both training modules and successful completion of the individual assignment.

**3.5 Reporting and Finalisation (1 Expert Day)**

The expert will:

- Finalise the CER knowledge package.
- Prepare a trainer toolkit for future national roll-out activities.
- Prepare the final implementation report.
- Provide recommendations for future recertification cycles and CER capacity-development activities.

The abovementioned tasks and responsibilities represent the milestones of the assignment to be delivered within the time framework of **16 (sixteen) working days**.

## 4. Necessary qualifications of the required expert

The expert shall possess:

*Qualifications and skills*:

- A master's degree in public administration, management, social sciences, human-resource management or a related field.
- Formal qualification and demonstrated expertise as a CAF trainer and External Feedback Actor.
- Proven involvement in the development of the CER methodology.

*General professional experience*:

- Minimum 15 years of professional experience related to public administration, public-sector reform, organisational development or quality management.

*Specific professional experience*:

- At least 10 years of experience in public-sector quality management.
- At least five years of practical experience in implementing the CAF 2020 model.
- Proven experience designing and delivering CAF, PEF and training-of-trainers programmes.
- Experience assessing competencies of External Feedback Actors and supporting EFA recertification processes.
- Practical experience advising public administrations on quality-management systems and CAF institutionalisation.
- Strong knowledge of European and Western Balkan CAF implementation practices and networks.

*Skills:*

- Advanced facilitation, analytical and report-writing skills.
- Proven experience in training-of-trainers methodologies.
- Excellent command of English

Note: The expert shall not be a civil/public servant in any of the Western Balkans' administrations at the moment he/she applies for this assignment.

## 5. Timing and Location

The assignment involves work from home/office. The assignment is expected to be performed tentatively from **December 2026** to **February 2027.**

## 6. Remunerations

**The assignment foresees the engagement of up to 16 (sixteen) expert days in the amount of up to 8.000 EUR.**

The daily fee will be determined in accordance with ReSPA's expert selection procedure and based on the expert's assessed qualifications and experience. The payment will be made in one instalment upon completing the assignment and submitting the documents required to execute the payment.

Note: This amount covers expert fees only. Travel, accommodation, meals, and other event-related costs will be provided separately by ReSPA and are not included in the expert fee.

## 7. Reporting and Final Documentation

The expert shall ensure regular communication with ReSPA and throughout the assignment and provide updates on the progress of activities as required.

Upon completion of the assignment, the expert shall submit a **Final Report** summarising the activities carried out, methodology applied and key findings and recommendations.

The expert shall provide the following deliverables:

| Deliverable | Description |
|---|---|
| **CER Training Design Package** | Training methodology, agendas, participant-selection criteria and implementation plan |
| **Online CER Onboarding Training** | Delivery of two online sessions and accompanying training materials |
| **CER Recertification Training Materials** | Presentations, case studies, simulations, exercises, templates and assessment tools |
| **Regional CER Recertification Training** | Delivery of a one-day in-person training and Training-of-Trainers programme |
| **Individual Assessment and Recertification** | Assessment of participant assignments, written feedback and recertification recommendations |
| **Trainer's Toolkit and National Roll-out Package** | Standardised curriculum, facilitator guidance, presentations, exercises, case studies, templates and practical tools enabling recertified EFAs to organise and deliver national CER training programmes |
| **CER Knowledge Package** | Consolidated training materials, guidelines, templates and practical tools for future use |
| **Final Implementation Report** | Summary of activities, participation, assessment results, lessons learned and recommendations |

All deliverables shall be subject to ReSPA's review and approval.

***Documents required for payment***

- Invoice (signed original);
- Timesheets (signed original);
- Final brief report on the assignment